

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20. (cancelled)

21. (new) An apparatus for controlling units within a continuous flow from at least one incoming feeder track into at least one outgoing feeder track, said apparatus comprising:

at least one shifting device for controlled shifting of said flow from said incoming feeder track into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track; and,

a control device capable of controlling speeds of each said unit and of determining proper shifting of said shifting device,

wherein said control device allows for separation of said units with respect to one another in a longitudinal direction of flow, said separation allowing for said controlled shifting without arresting said continuous flow.

22. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said control device operates in dependence of the speed of each said unit from said incoming feeder track and the properties of said shifting device and said outgoing feeder track.

23. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, further comprising means for shifting said shifting device.

24. (new) The apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said means for shifting said shifting device is a motor controlled by commands from said control device.

25. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, further comprising means for controlling the speeds of each said unit.

26. (new) The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said means for controlling the speeds of each said unit operates to accelerate each said unit along conveyor means.

27. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein each said unit is accelerated along said shifting device to a speed exceeding the speed of said flow from said incoming feeder track.

28. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said incoming feeder track is arranged for feeding units at a variable speed, while said shifting device is arranged for a constant speed.

29. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are horizontally spaced.

30. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are vertically spaced.

31. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said at least one shifting device is pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis.

32. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.

33. (new) An apparatus for controlling units within a continuous flow from at least one incoming feeder track into at least one outgoing feeder track, said apparatus comprising:

at least one shifting device for controlled shifting of said flow from said incoming feeder track into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track;

means for shifting said shifting device;

means for controlling speeds of each said unit; and,

a control device capable of controlling said means for shifting said shifting device and said means for controlling the speeds of each said unit, wherein said control device operates in dependence of the speed of each said unit from said incoming feeder track and the properties of said shifting device and said outgoing feeder track,

wherein said control device allows for separation of said units with respect to one another in a longitudinal direction of flow, said separation allowing for said controlled shifting without arresting said continuous flow.

34. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said means for shifting said shifting device is a motor controlled by commands from said control device.

35. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein each said unit is accelerated along said shifting device to a speed exceeding the speed of said flow from said incoming feeder track.

36. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said incoming feeder track is arranged for feeding units at a variable speed, while said shifting device is arranged for a constant speed.

37. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are horizontally spaced.

38. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are vertically spaced.

39. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said at least one shifting device is pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis.

40. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.